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THE

CHAPEL OF THE HERMITS,

AND

OTHER POEMS.

BY

JOHN G. WHITTIER.

BOSTON:
TICKNOR, REED, AND FIELDS.
M DCCC LIII.

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POEMS.

THE CHAPEL OF THE HERMITS.

"I do believe, and yet, in grief,
I pray for help to unbelief;
For needful strength aside to lay
The daily cumberings of my way.

"I'm sick at heart of craft and cant,
Sick of the crazed enthusiast's rant,
Profession's smooth hypocrisies,
And creeds of iron, and lives of ease.

"I ponder o'er the sacred word,
I read the record of our Lord;
And, weak and troubled, envy them
Who touched His seamless garment's hem; —

"Who saw the tears of love He wept
Above the grave where Lazarus slept;
And heard, amidst the shadows dim
Of Olivet, His evening hymn.

"How blessed the swine-herd's low estate,
The beggar crouching at the gate,
The leper loathly and abhorred,
Whose eyes of flesh beheld the Lord!

"O, sacred soil His sandals pressed!
Sweet fountains of His noonday rest!
O, light and air of Palestine,
Impregnate with His life divine!

"O, bear me thither! Let me look
On Siloa's pool, and Kedron's brook, —
Kneel at Gethsemane, and by
Gennesaret walk, before I die!

"Methinks this cold and northern night
Would melt before that Orient light;
And, wet by Hermon's dew and rain,
My childhood's faith revive again!"

So spake my friend, one autumn day,
Where the still river slid away
Beneath us, and above the brown
Red curtains of the woods shut down.

Then said I, — for I could not brook
The mute appealing of his look, —
"I, too, am weak, and faith is small,
And blindness happeneth unto all.

"Yet, sometimes glimpses on my sight,
Through present wrong, the eternal right;
And, step by step, since time began,
I see the steady gain of man:

"That all of good the past hath had
Remains to make our own time glad, —
Our common daily life divine,
And every land a Palestine.

"Thou weariest of thy present state;
What gain to thee time's holiest date?
The doubter now perchance had been
As High Priest or as Pilate then!

"What thought Chorazin's scribes? What faith
In Him had Nain and Nazareth?
Of the few followers whom He led,
One sold him, — all forsook and fled.

"O, friend! we need nor rock nor sand,
Nor storied stream of Morning-Land;
The heavens are glassed in Merrimack, —
What more could Jordan render back?

"We lack but open eye and ear
To find the Orient's marvels here; —
The still small voice in autumn's hush,
Yon maple wood the burning bush.

"For still the new transcends the old,
In signs and tokens manifold; —
Slaves rise up men; the olive waves
With roots deep set in battle graves!

"Through the harsh noises of our day
A low, sweet prelude finds its way;
Through clouds of doubt, and creeds of fear,
A light is breaking, calm and clear.

"That song of Love, now low and far,
Ere long shall swell from star to star!
That light, the breaking day, which tips
The golden-spired Apocalypse!"

Then, when my good friend shook his head,
And, sighing, sadly smiled, I said:
"Thou mind'st me of a story told
In rare Bernardin's leaves of gold."[1]

And, while the slanted sunbeams wove
The shadows of the frost-stained grove,
And, picturing all, the river ran
O'er cloud and wood, I thus began:

In Mount Valerien's chestnut wood
The Chapel of the Hermits stood;
And thither, at the close of day,
Came two old pilgrims, worn and gray.

One, whose impetuous youth defied
The storms of Baikal's wintry side,
And mused and dreamed where tropic day
Flamed o'er his lost Virginia's bay.

His simple tale of love and woe
All hearts had melted, high or low; —
A blissful pain, a sweet distress,
Immortal in its tenderness.

Yet, while above his charméd page
Beat quick the young heart of his age,
He walked amidst the crowd unknown,
A sorrowing old man, strange and lone.

A homeless, troubled age, — the gray
Pale setting of a weary day;
Too dull his ear for voice of praise,
Too sadly worn his brow for bays.

Pride, lust of power and glory, slept;
Yet still his heart its young dream kept;
And, wandering like the deluge-dove,
Still sought the resting-place of love.

And, mateless, childless, envied more
The peasant's welcome from his door,
By smiling eyes at eventide,
Than kingly gifts or lettered pride.

Until, in place of wife and child,
All-pitying Nature on him smiled,
And gave to him the golden keys
To all her inmost sanctities.

Mild Druid of her wood-paths dim!
She laid her great heart bare to him,
Its loves and sweet accords; — he saw
The beauty of her perfect law.

The language of her signs he knew,
What notes her cloudy clarion blew;
The rhythm of autumn's forest dyes,
The hymn of sunset's painted skies.

And thus he seemed to hear the song
Which swept, of old, the stars along;
And to his eyes the earth once more
Its fresh and primal beauty wore.

Who sought with him, from summer air,
And field and wood, a balm for care;
And bathed in light of sunset skies
His tortured nerves and weary eyes?

His fame on all the winds had flown;
His words had shaken crypt and throne;
Like fire, on camp and court and cell
They dropped, and kindled as they fell.

Beneath the pomps of state, below
The mitred juggler's masque and show,
A prophecy — a vague hope — ran
His burning thought from man to man.

For peace or rest too well he saw
The fraud of priests, the wrong of law;
And felt how hard, between the two,
Their breath of pain the millions drew.

A prophet-utterance, strong and wild,
The weakness of an unweaned child,
A sun-bright hope for human kind,
And self-despair, in him combined.

He loathed the false, yet lived not true
To half the glorious truths he knew;
The doubt, the discord, and the sin,
He mourned without, he felt within.

Untrod by him the path he showed,
Sweet pictures on his easel glowed
Of simple faith, and loves of home,
And virtue's golden days to come.

But weakness, shame and folly, made
The foil to all his pen portrayed;
Still, where his dreamy splendors shone,
The shadow of himself was thrown.

Lord, what is man, whose thought, at times,
Up to Thy seven-fold brightness climbs,
While still his grosser instinct clings
To earth, like other creeping things!

So rich in words, in acts so mean;
So high, so low; chance-swung between
The foulness of the penal pit
And Truth's clear sky, millennium-lit!

Vain pride of star-lent genius ! — vain
Quick fancy and creative brain,
Unblest by prayerful sacrifice,
Absurdly great, or weakly wise !

Midst yearnings for a truer life,
Without were fears, within was strife ;
And still his wayward act denied
The perfect good for which he sighed.

The love he sent forth void returned ;
The fame that crowned him scorched and burned ;
Burning, yet cold and drear and lone, —
A fire-mount in a frozen zone !

Like that the gray-haired sea-king passed,[2]
Seen southward from his sleety mast,
About whose brows of changeless frost
A wreath of flame the wild winds tossed.

Far round the mournful beauty played
Of lambent light and purple shade,
Lost on the fixed and dumb despair
Of frozen earth and sea and air !

A man apart, unknown, unloved
By those whose wrongs his soul had moved,
He bore the ban of Church and State,
The good man's fear, the bigot's hate!

Forth from the city's noise and throng,
Its pomp and shame, its sin and wrong,
The twain that summer day had strayed
To Mount Valerien's chestnut shade.

To them the green fields and the wood
Lent something of their quietude,
And golden-tinted sunset seemed
Prophetical of all they dreamed.

The hermits from their simple cares
The bell was calling home to prayers,
And, listening to its sound, the twain
Seemed lapped in childhood's trust again.

Wide open stood the chapel door;
A sweet old music, swelling o'er
Low prayerful murmurs, issued thence, —
The Litanies of Providence!

Then Rousseau spake: — "Where two or three
In His name meet, He there will be!"
And then, in silence, on their knees
They sank beneath the chestnut-trees.

As to the blind returning light,
As daybreak to the Arctic night,
Old faith revived: the doubts of years
Dissolved in reverential tears.

That gush of feeling overpast,
"Ah me!" Bernardin sighed at last,
"I would thy bitterest foes could see
Thy heart as it is seen of me!

"No church of God hast thou denied;
Thou hast but spurned in scorn aside
A base and hollow counterfeit,
Profaning the pure name of it!

"With dry dead moss and marish weeds
His fire the western herdsman feeds,
And greener from the ashen plain
The sweet spring grasses rise again.

"Nor thunder-peal nor mighty wind
Disturb the solid sky behind;
And through the cloud the red bolt rends
The calm, still smile of Heaven descends!

"Thus through the world, like bolt and blast,
And scourging fire, thy words have passed.
Clouds break, — the steadfast heavens remain;
Weeds burn, — the ashes feed the grain!

"But whoso strives with wrong may find
Its touch pollute, its darkness blind;
And learn, as latent fraud is shown
In others' faith, to doubt his own.

"With dream and falsehood, simple trust
And pious hope we tread in dust;
Lost the calm faith in goodness, — lost
The baptism of the Pentecost!

"Alas! — the blows for error meant
Too oft on truth itself are spent,
As through the false and vile and base
Looks forth her sad, rebuking face.

"Not ours the Theban's charméd life;
We came not scathless from the strife!
The Python's coil about us clings,
The trampled Hydra bites and stings!

"Meanwhile, the sport of seeming chance,
The plastic shapes of circumstance,
What might have been we fondly guess,
If earlier born, or tempted less.

"And thou, in these wild, troubled days,
Misjudged alike in blame and praise,
Unsought and undeserved the same
The sceptic's praise, the bigot's blame; —

"I cannot doubt, if thou had'st been
Among the highly-favored men
Who walked on earth with Fenelon,
He would have owned thee as his son;

"And, bright with wings of cherubim
Visibly waving over him,
Seen through his life, the church had seemed
All that its old confessors dreamed."

"I would have been," Jean Jaques replied,
"The humblest servant at his side,
Obscure, unknown, content to see
How beautiful man's life may be!

"O, more than thrice-blest relic, more
Than solemn rite or sacred lore,
The holy life of one who trod
The foot-marks of the Christ of God!

"Amidst a blinded world he saw
The oneness of the Dual law;
That Heaven's sweet peace on Earth began,
And God was loved through love of man.

"He lived the Truth which reconciled
The strong man Reason, Faith the child:
In him belief and act were one,
The homilies of duty done!"

So speaking, through the twilight gray
The two old pilgrims went their way.
What seeds of life that day were sown,
The heavenly watchers knew alone.

Time passed, and Autumn came to fold
Green Summer in her brown and gold:
Time passed, and Winter's tears of snow
Dropped on the grave-mound of Rousseau!

"The tree remaineth where it fell,
The pained on earth is pained in hell!"
So priestcraft from its altars cursed
The mournful doubts its falsehood nursed.

Ah! well of old the Psalmist prayed,
"Thy hand, not man's, on me be laid!"
Earth frowns below, Heaven weeps above,
And man is hate, but God is love!

No Hermits now the wanderer sees,
Nor chapel with its chestnut-trees;
A morning dream, a tale that 's told,
The wave of change o'er all has rolled.

Yet lives the lesson of that day;
And from its twilight cool and gray
Comes up a low, sad whisper: — "Make
The truth thine own, for truth's own sake.

"Why wait to see in thy brief span
Its perfect flower and fruit in man?
No saintly touch can save; no balm
Of healing hath the martyr's palm.

"Midst soulless forms, and false pretence
Of spiritual pride and pampered sense,
A voice saith, 'What is that to thee?
Be true thyself, and follow Me!'

"In days when throne and altar heard
The wanton's wish, the bigot's word,
And pomp of state and ritual show
Scarce hid the loathsome death below, —

"Midst fawning priests and courtiers foul,
The losel swarm of crown and cowl,
White-robed walked Francois Fenelon,
Stainless as Uriel in the sun!

"Yet in his time the stake blazed red,
The poor were eaten up like bread;
Men knew him not: his garment's hem
No healing virtue had for them.

"Alas! no present saint we find;
The white cymar gleams far behind,
Revealed in outline vague, sublime,
Through telescopic mists of time!

"Trust not in man with passing breath,
But in the Lord, old Scripture saith;
The truth which saves thou may'st not blend
With false professor, faithless friend.

"Search thine own heart. What paineth thee
In others in thyself may be;
All dust is frail, all flesh is weak;
Be thou the true man thou dost seek!

"Where now with pain thou treadest, trod
The whitest of the saints of God!
To show thee where their feet were set,
The light which led them shineth yet.

"The foot-prints of the life divine,
Which marked their path, remain in thine;
And that great Life, transfused in theirs,
Awaits thy faith, thy love, thy prayers!"

A lesson which I well may heed,
A word of fitness to my need;
So from that twilight cool and gray
Still saith a voice, or seems to say.

We rose, and slowly homeward turned,
While down the west the sunset burned;
And, in its light, hill, wood and tide,
And human forms, seemed glorified.

The village homes transfigured stood,
And purple bluffs, whose belting wood
Across the waters leaned to hold
The yellow leaves like lamps of gold.

Then spake my friend: — "Thy words are true;
Forever old, forever new,
These home-seen splendors are the same
Which over Eden's sunsets came.

"To these bowed heavens let wood and hill
Lift voiceless praise and anthems still;
Fall, warm with blessing, over them,
Light of the New Jerusalem!

"Flow on, sweet river, like the stream
Of John's Apocalyptic dream!
This mapled ridge shall Horeb be,
Yon green-banked lake our Galilee!

"Henceforth my heart shall sigh no more
For olden time and holier shore;
God's love and blessing, then and there,
Are now and here and everywhere."

QUESTIONS OF LIFE.

And the angel that was sent unto me, whose name was Uriel, gave me an answer, and said,

"Thy heart hath gone too far in this world, and thinkest thou to comprehend the way of the Most High?"

Then said I, "Yea, my Lord."

Then said he unto me, "Go thy way, weigh me the weight of the fire, or measure me the blast of the wind, or call me again the day that is past." — 2 Esdras, chap. iv.

A BENDING staff I would not break,
A feeble faith I would not shake,
Nor even rashly pluck away
The error which some truth may stay,
Whose loss might leave the soul without
A shield against the shafts of doubt.

And yet, at times, when over all
A darker mystery seems to fall
(May God forgive the child of dust,
Who seeks to *know*, where Faith should *trust!*),

I raise the questions, old and dark,
Of Uzdom's tempted patriarch,
And, speech-confounded, build again
The baffled tower of Shinar's plain.

I am: how little more I know!
Whence came I? Whither do I go?
A centred self, which feels and is;
A cry between the silences;
A shadow-birth of clouds at strife
With sunshine on the hills of life;
A shaft from Nature's quiver cast
Into the Future from the Past;
Between the cradle and the shroud,
A meteor's flight from cloud to cloud.

Thorough the vastness, arching all,
I see the great stars rise and fall,
The rounding seasons come and go,
The tided oceans ebb and flow;
The tokens of a central force,
Whose circles, in their widening course,
O'erlap and move the universe;

The workings of the law whence springs
The rhythmic harmony of things,
Which shapes in earth the darkling spar,
And orbs in heaven the morning star.
Of all I see, in earth and sky, —
Star, flower, beast, bird, — what part have I?
This conscious life, — is it the same
Which thrills the universal frame,
Whereby the caverned crystal shoots,
And mounts the sap from forest roots,
Whereby the exiled wood-bird tells
When Spring makes green her native dells?
How feels the stone the pang of birth,
Which brings its sparkling prism forth?
The forest-tree the throb which gives
The life-blood to its new-born leaves?
Do bird and blossom feel, like me,
Life's many-folded mystery, —
The wonder which it is TO BE?
Or stand I severed and distinct,
From Nature's chain of life unlinked?
Allied to all, yet not the less
Prisoned in separate consciousness,

Alone o'erburdened with a sense
Of life, and cause, and consequence?

In vain to me the Sphinx propounds
The riddle of her sights and sounds;
Back still the vaulted mystery gives
The echoed question it receives.
What sings the brook? What oracle
Is in the pine-tree's organ-swell?
What may the wind's low burden be?
The meaning of the moaning sea?
The hieroglyphics of the stars?
Or clouded sunset's crimson bars?
I vainly ask, for mocks my skill
The trick of Nature's cipher still.

I turn from Nature unto men,
I ask the stylus and the pen;
What sang the bards of old? What meant
The prophets of the Orient?
The rolls of buried Egypt, hid
In painted tomb and pyramid?

What mean Idúmea's arrowy lines,
Or dusk Elora's monstrous signs?
How speaks the primal thought of man
From the grim carvings of Copan?
Where rests the secret? Where the keys
Of the old death-bolted mysteries?
Alas! the dead retain their trust;
Dust hath no answer from the dust.

The great enigma still unguessed,
Unanswered the eternal quest;
I gather up the scattered rays
Of wisdom in the early days,
Faint gleams and broken, like the light
Of meteors in a northern night,
Betraying to the darkling earth
The unseen sun which gave them birth;
I listen to the sibyl's chant,
The voice of priest and hierophant;
I know what Indian Kreeshna saith,
And what of life and what of death
The demon taught to Socrates;
And what, beneath his garden-trees

Slow pacing, with a dream-like tread,
The solemn-thoughted Plato said;
Nor lack I tokens, great or small,
Of God's clear light in each and all,
While holding with more dear regard
The scroll of Hebrew seer and bard,
The starry pages promise-lit
With Christ's Evangel over-writ,
Thy miracle of life and death,
O, holy one of Nazareth!

On Aztec ruins, gray and lone,
The circling serpent coils in stone, —
Type of the endless and unknown;
Whereof we seek the clue to find,
With groping fingers of the blind!
Forever sought, and never found,
We trace that serpent-symbol round
Our resting-place, our starting bound!
O, thriftlessness of dream and guess!
O, wisdom which is foolishness!
Why idly seek from outward things
The answer inward silence brings;

Why stretch beyond our proper sphere
And age, for that which lies so near?
Why climb the far-off hills with pain,
A nearer view of heaven to gain?
In lowliest depths of bosky dells
The hermit Contemplation dwells.
A fountain's pine-hung slope his seat,
And lotus-twined his silent feet,
Whence, piercing heaven, with screenéd sight,
He sees at noon the stars, whose light
Shall glorify the coming night.

Here let me pause, my quest forego;
Enough for me to feel and know
That he in whom the cause and end,
The past and future, meet and blend, —
Who, girt with his immensities,
Our vast and star-hung system sees,
Small as the clustered Pleiades, —
Moves not alone the heavenly quires,
But waves the spring-time's grassy spires,
Guards not archangel feet alone,
But deigns to guide and keep my own;

Speaks not alone the words of fate
Which worlds destroy, and worlds create,
But whispers in my spirit's ear,
In tones of love, or warning fear,
A language none beside may hear.

To Him, from wanderings long and wild,
I come, an over-wearied child,
In cool and shade His peace to find,
Like dew-fall settling on my mind.
Assured that all I know is best,
And humbly trusting for the rest,
I turn from Fancy's cloud-built scheme,
Dark creed, and mournful eastern dream
Of power, impersonal and cold,
Controlling all, itself controlled,
Maker and slave of iron laws,
Alike the subject and the cause;
From vain philosophies, that try
The seven-fold gates of mystery,
And, baffled ever, babble still,
Word-prodigal of fate and will;

From Nature, and her mockery, Art,
And book and speech of men apart,
To the still witness in my heart;
With reverence waiting to behold
His Avatár of love unfold,
The Eternal Beauty new and old!

THE PRISONERS OF NAPLES.

I HAVE been thinking of the victims bound
In Naples, dying for the lack of air
And sunshine, in their close, damp cells of pain,
Where hope is not, and innocence in vain
Appeals against the torture and the chain!
Unfortunates! whose crime it was to share
Our common love of freedom, and to dare,
In its behalf, Rome's harlot triple-crowned,
And her base pander, the most hateful thing
Who upon Christian or on Pagan ground
Makes vile the old heroic name of king.
O, God most merciful! Father just and kind!
Whom man hath bound let Thy right hand unbind.
Or, if Thy purposes of good behind
Their ills lie hidden, let the sufferers find
Strong consolations; leave them not to doubt
Thy providential care, nor yet without
The hope which all Thy attributes inspire,

That not in vain the martyr's robe of fire
Is worn, nor the sad prisoner's fretting chain;
Since all who suffer for Thy truth send forth,
Electrical, with every throb of pain,
Unquenchable sparks, Thy own baptismal rain
Of fire and spirit over all the earth,
Making the dead in slavery live again.
Let this great hope be with them, as they lie
Shut from the light, the greenness, and the sky, —
From the cool waters and the pleasant breeze,
The smell of flowers, and shade of summer trees;
Bound with the felon lepers, whom disease
And sins abhorred make loathsome; let them share
Pellico's faith, Foresti's strength to bear
Years of unutterable torment, stern and still,
As the chained Titan victor through his will!
Comfort them with Thy future; let them see
The day-dawn of Italian liberty;
For that, with all good things, is hid with Thee,
And, perfect in Thy thought, awaits its time to be!

I, who have spoken for freedom at the cost
Of some weak friendships, or some paltry prize

Of name or place, and more than I have lost
Have gained in wider reach of sympathies,
And free communion with the good and wise, —
May God forbid that I should ever boast
Such easy self-denial, or repine
That the strong pulse of health no more is mine;
That, overworn at noonday, I must yield
To other hands the gleaning of the field, —
A tired on-looker through the day's decline.
For blest beyond deserving still, and knowing
That kindly Providence its care is showing
In the withdrawal as in the bestowing,
Scarcely I dare for more or less to pray.
Beautiful yet for me this autumn day
Melts on its sunset hills; and, far away,
For me the Ocean lifts its solemn psalm,
To me the pine-woods whisper; and for me
Yon river, winding through its vales of calm,
By greenest banks, with asters purple-starred,
And gentian bloom and golden-rod made gay,
Flows down in silent gladness to the sea,
Like a pure spirit to its great reward!

Nor lack I friends, long-tried and near and dear,
Whose love is round me like this atmosphere,
Warm, soft and golden. For such gifts to me,
What shall I render, O my God, to Thee?
Let me not dwell upon my lighter share
Of pain and ill that human life must bear;
Save me from selfish pining; let my heart,
Drawn from itself in sympathy, forget
The bitter longings of a vain regret,
The anguish of its own peculiar smart.
Remembering others, as I have to-day,
In their great sorrows, let me live alway
Not for myself alone, but have a part,
Such as a frail and erring spirit may,
In love which is of Thee, and which indeed Thou art!

THE PEACE OF EUROPE—1852.

"Great peace in Europe! Order reigns
From Tiber's hills to Danube's plains!"
So say her kings and priests; so say
The lying prophets of our day.

Go lay to earth a listening ear;
The tramp of measured marches hear, —
The rolling of the cannon's wheel,
The shotted musket's murderous peal,
The night alarm, the sentry's call,
The quick-eared spy in hut and hall!
From Polar sea and tropic fen
The dying-groans of exiled men!
The bolted cell, the galley's chains,
The scaffold smoking with its stains!
Order — the hush of brooding slaves!
Peace — in the dungeon-vaults and graves!

O, Fisher! of the world-wide net,
With meshes in all waters set,
Whose fabled keys of heaven and hell
Bolt hard the patriot's prison-cell,
And open wide the banquet-hall,
Where kings and priests hold carnival!
Weak vassal tricked in royal guise,
Boy Kaiser with thy lip of lies;
Base gambler for Napoleon's crown,
Barnacle on his dead renown!
Thou, Bourbon Neapolitan,
Crowned scandal, loathed of God and man;
And thou, fell Spider of the North!
Stretching thy giant feelers forth,
Within whose web the freedom dies
Of nations eaten up like flies!
Speak, Prince and Kaiser, Priest and Czar!
If this be Peace, pray what is War?

White Angel of the Lord! unmeet
That soil accursed for thy pure feet.
Never in Slavery's desert flows
The fountain of thy charmed repose;

No tyrant's hand thy chaplet weaves
Of lilies and of olive-leaves;
Not with the wicked shalt thou dwell,
Thus saith the Eternal Oracle;
Thy home is with the pure and free!
Stern herald of thy better day,
Before thee, to prepare thy way,
The Baptist Shade of Liberty,
Gray, scarred and hairy-robed, must press
With bleeding feet the wilderness!
O! that its voice might pierce the ear
Of princes, trembling while they hear
A cry as of the Hebrew seer:
REPENT! GOD'S KINGDOM DRAWETH NEAR!

WORDSWORTH.

WRITTEN ON A BLANK LEAF OF HIS MEMOIRS.

Dear friends, who read the world aright,
And in its common forms discern
A beauty and a harmony
The many never learn!

Kindred in soul of him who found
In simple flower and leaf and stone
The impulse of the sweetest lays
Our Saxon tongue has known, —

Accept this record of a life
As sweet and pure, as calm and good,
As a long day of blandest June
In green field and in wood.

How welcome to our ears, long pained
By strife of sect and party noise,
The brook-like murmur of his song
Of nature's simple joys!

The violet by its mossy stone,
  The primrose by the river's brim,
And chance-sown daffodil, have found
  Immortal life through him.

The sunrise on his breezy lake,
  The rosy tints his sunset brought,
World-seen, are gladdening all the vales
  And mountain-peaks of thought.

Art builds on sand; the works of pride
  And human passion change and fall;
But that which shares the life of God
  With Him surviveth all.

TO ——.

LINES WRITTEN AFTER A SUMMER DAY'S EXCURSION.

Fair Nature's priestesses! to whom,
In hieroglyph of bud and bloom,
Her mysteries are told;
Who, wise in lore of wood and mead,
The seasons' pictured scrolls can read,
In lessons manifold!

Thanks for the courtesy, and gay
Good humor, which on Washing Day
Our ill-timed visit bore;
Thanks for your graceful oars, which broke
The morning dreams of Artichoke,
Along his wooded shore!

Varied as varying Nature's ways,
Sprites of the river, woodland fays,
Or mountain-nymphs, ye seem;

Free-limbed Dianas on the green,
Loch Katrine's Ellen, or Undine,
Upon your favorite stream.

The forms of which the poets told,
The fair benignities of old,
Were doubtless such as you;
What more than Artichoke the rill
Of Helicon? Than Pipe-stave hill
Arcadia's mountain-view?

No sweeter bowers the bee delayed,
In wild Hymettus' scented shade,
Than those you dwell among;
Snow-flowered azalias, intertwined
With roses, over banks inclined
With trembling hare-bells hung!

A charméd life unknown to death,
Immortal freshness Nature hath;
Her fabled fount and glen
Are now and here: Dodona's shrine
Still murmurs in the wind-swept pine,—
All is that e'er hath been.

The Beauty which old Greece or Rome
Sung, painted, wrought, lies close at home;
We need but eye and ear
In all our daily walks to trace
The outlines of incarnate grace,
The hymns of gods to hear!

IN PEACE.

A TRACK of moonlight on a quiet lake,
Whose small waves on a silver-sanded shore
Whisper of peace, and with the low winds make
Such harmonies as keep the woods awake,
And listening all night long for their sweet sake;
A green-waved slope of meadow, hovered o'er
By angel-troops of lilies, swaying light
On viewless stems, with folded wings of white;
A slumberous stretch of mountain-land, far seen
Where the low westering day, with gold and green,
Purple and amber, softly blended, fills
The wooded vales, and melts among the hills;
A vine-fringed river, winding to its rest
On the calm bosom of a stormless sea,
Bearing alike upon its placid breast,
With earthly flowers and heavenly stars impressed,
The hues of time and of eternity:
Such are the pictures which the thought of thee,

O friend, awakeneth, — charming the keen pain
Of thy departure, and our sense of loss
Requiting with the fulness of thy gain.
Lo! on the quiet grave thy life-borne cross,
Dropped only at its side, methinks doth shine,
Of thy beatitude the radiant sign!
No sob of grief, no wild lament, be there,
To break the Sabbath of the holy air;
But, in their stead, the silent-breathing prayer
Of hearts still waiting for a rest like thine.
O spirit redeemed! Forgive us, if henceforth,
With sweet and pure similitudes of earth,
We keep thy pleasant memory freshly green,
Of love's inheritance a priceless part,
Which Fancy's self, in reverent awe, is seen
To paint, forgetful of the tricks of art,
With pencil dipped alone in colors of the heart.

BENEDICITE.

God's love and peace be with thee, where
Soe'er this soft autumnal air
Lifts the dark tresses of thy hair!

Whether through city casements comes
Its kiss to thee, in crowded rooms,
Or, out among the woodland blooms,

It freshens o'er thy thoughtful face,
Imparting, in its glad embrace,
Beauty to beauty, grace to grace!

Fair Nature's book together read,
The old wood-paths that knew our tread,
The maple shadows overhead, —

The hills we climbed, the river seen
By gleams along its deep ravine, —
All keep thy memory fresh and green.

Where'er I look, where'er I stray,
Thy thought goes with me on my way,
And hence the prayer I breathe to-day!

O'er lapse of time and change of scene,
The weary waste which lies between
Thyself and me, my heart I lean.

Thou lack'st not Friendship's spell-word, nor
The half-unconscious power to draw
All hearts to thine by Love's sweet law.

With these good gifts of God is cast
Thy lot, and many a charm thou hast
To hold the blessed angels fast.

If, then, a fervent wish for thee
The gracious heavens will heed from me,
What should, dear heart, its burden be?

The sighing of a shaken reed —
What can I more than meekly plead
The greatness of our common need?

God's love — unchanging, pure and true —
The Paraclete white-shining through
His peace — the fall of Hermon's dew!

With such a prayer, on this sweet day,
As thou may'st hear and I may say,
I greet thee, dearest, far away!

PICTURES.

I.

Light, warmth, and sprouting greenness, and o'er all
Blue, stainless, steel-bright ether, raining down
Tranquillity upon the deep-hushed town,
The freshening meadows, and the hill-sides brown;
Voice of the west wind from the hills of pine,
And the brimmed river from its distant fall,
Low hum of bees, and joyous interlude
Of bird-songs in the streamlet-skirting wood, —
Heralds and prophecies of sound and sight,
Blessed forerunners of the warmth and light,
Attendant angels to the house of prayer,
With reverent footsteps keeping pace with mine, —
Once more, through God's great love, with you I share
A morn of resurrection sweet and fair
As that which saw, of old, in Palestine,
Immortal Love uprising in fresh bloom
From the dark night and winter of the tomb!

Fifth month, 2*d*, 1852.

II.

White with its sun-bleached dust, the pathway winds
Before me; dust is on the shrunken grass,
And on the trees beneath whose boughs I pass;
Frail screen against the Hunter of the sky,
Who, glaring on me with his lidless eye,
While mounting with his dog-star high and higher,
Ambushed in light intolerable, unbinds
The burnished quiver of his shafts of fire.
Between me and the hot fields of his South
A tremulous glow, as from a furnace-mouth,
Glimmers and swims before my dazzled sight,
As if the burning arrows of his ire
Broke as they fell, and shattered into light!
Yet on my cheek I feel the Western wind,
And hear it telling to the orchard trees,
And to the faint and flower-forsaken bees,
Tales of fair meadows, green with constant streams,
And mountains rising blue and cool behind,
Where in moist dells the purple orchis gleams,
And starred with white the virgin's bower is twined.
So the o'erwearied pilgrim, as he fares
Along life's summer waste, at times is fanned,

Even at noontide, by the cool, sweet airs
Of a serener and a holier land,
Fresh as the morn, and as the dewfall bland.
Breath of the blessed Heaven for which we pray,
Blow from the eternal hills! — make glad our earthly way!

Eighth month, 1852.

DERNE.[3]

Night on the city of the Moor!
On mosque and tomb, and white-walled shore,
On sea-waves, to whose ceaseless knock
The narrow harbor-gates unlock,
On corsair's galley, carack tall,
And plundered Christian caraval!

The sounds of Moslem life are still;
No mule-bell tinkles down the hill;
Stretched in the broad court of the khan,
The dusty Bornou caravan
Lies heaped in slumber, beast and man;
The Sheik is dreaming in his tent,
His noisy Arab tongue o'er-spent;
The kiosk's glimmering lights are gone,
The merchant with his wares withdrawn;
Rough pillowed on some pirate breast,
The dancing-girl has sunk to rest;

And, save where measured footsteps fall
Along the Bashaw's guarded wall,
Or where, like some bad dream, the Jew
Creeps stealthily his quarter through,
Or counts with fear his golden heaps,
The City of the Corsair sleeps!

But where yon prison long and low
Stands black against the pale star-glow,
Chafed by the ceaseless wash of waves,
There watch and pine the Christian slaves; —
Rough-bearded men, whose far-off wives
Wear out with grief their lonely lives;
And youth, still flashing from his eyes
The clear blue of New England skies,
A treasured lock of whose soft hair
Now wakes some sorrowing mother's prayer;
Or, worn upon some maiden breast,
Stirs with the loving heart's unrest!

A bitter cup each life must drain,
The groaning earth is cursed with pain,

And, like the scroll the angel bore
The shuddering Hebrew seer before,
O'erwrit alike, without, within,
With all the woes which follow sin;
But, bitterest of the ills beneath
Whose load man totters down to death,
Is that which plucks the regal crown
Of Freedom from his forehead down,
And snatches from his powerless hand
The sceptred sign of self-command,
Effacing with the chain and rod
The image and the seal of God;
Till from his nature, day by day,
The manly virtues fall away,
And leave him naked, blind and mute,
The god-like merging in the brute!

Why mourn the quiet ones who die
Beneath affection's tender eye,
Unto their household and their kin
Like ripened corn-sheaves gathered in?
O weeper, from that tranquil sod,
That holy harvest-home of God,

Turn to the quick and suffering, — shed
Thy tears upon the living dead !
Thank God above thy dear ones' graves,
They sleep with Him, — they are not slaves !

What dark mass, down the mountain-sides
Swift-pouring, like a stream divides ? —
A long, loose, straggling caravan,
Camel and horse and arméd man.
The moon's low crescent, glimmering o'er
Its grave of waters to the shore,
Lights up that mountain cavalcade,
And glints from gun and spear and blade ;
Near and more near ! — now o'er them falls
The shadow of the city walls.
Hark to the sentry's challenge, drowned
In the fierce trumpet's charging sound ! —
The rush of men, the musket's peal,
The short, sharp clang of meeting steel !

Vain, Moslem, vain thy life-blood poured
So freely on thy foeman's sword !

Not to the swift nor to the strong
The battles of the right belong;
For he who strikes for Freedom wears
The armor of the captive's prayers,
And Nature proffers to his cause
The strength of her eternal laws;
While he whose arm essays to bind
And herd with common brutes his kind
Strives evermore at fearful odds
With Nature and the jealous gods,
And dares the dread recoil which late
Or soon their right shall vindicate.

'T is done, — the hornéd crescent falls!
The star-flag flouts the broken walls!
Joy to the captive husband! joy
To thy sick heart, O brown-locked boy!
In sullen wrath the conquered Moor
Wide open flings your dungeon-door,
And leaves ye free from cell and chain,
The owners of yourselves again.
Dark as his allies desert-born,
Soiled with the battle's stain, and worn

With the long marches of his band
Through hottest wastes of rock and sand, —
Scorched by the sun and furnace-breath
Of the red desert's wind of death, —
With welcome words and grasping hands,
The victor and deliverer stands!

The tale is one of distant skies;
The dust of half a century lies
Upon it; yet its hero's name
Still lingers on the lips of Fame.
Men speak the praise of him who gave
Deliverance to the Moorman's slave,
Yet dare to brand with shame and crime
The heroes of our land and time, —
The self-forgetful ones, who stake
Home, name and life, for Freedom's sake!
God mend his heart who cannot feel
The impulse of a holy zeal,
And sees not, with his sordid eyes,
The beauty of self-sacrifice!
Though in the sacred place he stands,
Uplifting consecrated hands,

Unworthy are his lips to tel.
Of Jesus' martyr-miracle,
Or name aright that dread embrace
Of suffering for a fallen race!

ASTRÆA.

——"Jove means to settle
Astrea in her seat again,
And let down from his golden chain
An age of better metal."
BEN JONSON, 1615.

O, POET rare and old!
Thy words are prophecies;
Forward the age of gold,
The new Saturnian lies.

The universal prayer
And hope are not in vain;
Rise, brothers! and prepare
The way for Saturn's reign.

Perish shall all which takes
From labor's board and can;
Perish shall all which makes
A spaniel of the man!

Free from its bonds the mind,
The body from the rod;
Broken all chains that bind
The image of our God.

Just men no longer pine
Behind their prison-bars;
Through the rent dungeon shine
The free sun and the stars.

Earth own, at last, untrod
By sect, or caste, or clan,
The fatherhood of God,
The brotherhood of man!

Fraud fail, craft perish, forth
The money-changers driven,
And God's will done on earth,
As now in heaven!

INVOCATION.

Through thy clear spaces, Lord, of old,
Formless and void the dead earth rolled;
Deaf to thy heaven's sweet music, blind
To the great lights which o'er it shined;
No sound, no ray, no warmth, no breath, —
A dumb despair, a wandering death.

To that dark, weltering horror came
Thy spirit, like a subtle flame, —
A breath of life electrical,
Awakening and transforming all,
Till beat and thrilled in every part
The pulses of a living heart.

Then knew their bounds the land and sea;
Then smiled the bloom of mead and tree;
From flower to moth, from beast to man,
The quick creative impulse ran;

And earth, with life from thee renewed,
Was in thy holy eyesight good.

As lost and void, as dark and cold
And formless as that earth of old, —
A wandering waste of storm and night,
Midst spheres of song and realms of light, —
A blot upon thy holy sky,
Untouched, unwarned of thee, am I.

O thou who movest on the deep
Of spirits, wake my own from sleep!
Its darkness melt, its coldness warm,
The lost restore, the ill transform,
That flower and fruit henceforth may be
Its grateful offering, worthy thee.

THE CROSS.

ON THE DEATH OF RICHARD DILLINGHAM, IN THE NASHVILLE PENITENTIARY.

"The cross, if rightly borne, shall be
No burden, but support to thee;"*
So, moved of old time for our sake,
The holy monk of Kempen spake.

Thou brave and true one! upon whom
Was laid the cross of martyrdom,
How didst thou, in thy generous youth,
Bear witness to this blessed truth!

Thy cross of suffering and of shame
A staff within thy hands became,
In paths where faith alone could see
The Master's steps supporting thee.

Thine was the seed-time; God alone
Beholds the end of what is sown;

* Thomas à Kempis. Imit. Christ.

Beyond our vision, weak and dim,
The harvest-time is hid with Him.

Yet, unforgotten where it lies,
That seed of generous sacrifice,
Though seeming on the desert cast,
Shall rise with bloom and fruit at last.

EVA.

Dry the tears for holy Eva,
With the blessed angels leave her;
Of the form so soft and fair
Give to earth the tender care.

For the golden locks of Eva
Let the sunny south-land give her
Flowery pillow of repose,—
Orange-bloom and budding rose.

In the better home of Eva
Let the shining ones receive her,
With the welcome-voicéd psalm,
Harp of gold and waving palm!

All is light and peace with Eva;
There the darkness cometh never;
Tears are wiped, and fetters fall,
And the Lord is all in all.

Weep no more for happy Eva,
Wrong and sin no more shall grieve her;
Care and pain and weariness
Lost in love so measureless.

Gentle Eva, loving Eva,
Child confessor, true believer,
Listener at the Master's knee,
"Suffer such to come to me."

O, for faith like thine, sweet Eva,
Lighting all the solemn river,
And the blessings of the poor
Wafting to the heavenly shore!

TO FREDRIKA BREMER.[1]

Seeress of the misty Norland,
Daughter of the Vikings bold,
Welcome to the sunny Vineland,
Which thy fathers sought of old!

Soft as flow of Silja's waters,
When the moon of summer shines,
Strong as Winter from his mountains
Roaring through the sleeted pines.

Heart and ear, we long have listened
To thy saga, rune and song,
Till a household joy and presence
We have known and loved thee long.

By the mansion's marble mantel,
Round the log-walled cabin's hearth,
Thy sweet thoughts and northern fancies
Meet and mingle with our mirth.

And, o'er weary spirits keeping
Sorrow's night-watch, long and chill,
Shine they like thy sun of summer
Over midnight vale and hill.

We alone are strangers to thee,
Thou our friend and teacher art;
Come, and know us as we know thee;
Let us meet thee heart to heart!

To our homes and household altars
We, in turn, thy steps would lead,
As thy loving hand has led us
O'er the threshold of the Swede.

APRIL.

"The spring comes slowly up this way."

CHRISTABEL.

'T is the noon of the spring-time, yet never a bird
In the wind-shaken elm or the maple is heard;
For green meadow-grasses wide levels of snow,
And blowing of drifts where the crocus should blow;
Where wind-flower and violet, amber and white,
On south-sloping brook-sides should smile in the light,
O'er the cold winter-beds of their late-waking roots
The frosty flake eddies, the ice-crystal shoots;
And, longing for light, under wind-driven heaps,
Round the boles of the pine-wood the ground-laurel creeps,
Unkissed of the sunshine, unbaptized of showers,
With buds scarcely swelled, which should burst into flowers!

We wait for thy coming, sweet wind of the south!
For the touch of thy light wings, the kiss of thy mouth;
For the yearly evangel thou bearest from God,
Resurrection and life to the graves of the sod!
Up our long river-valley, for days, have not ceased
The wail and the shriek of the bitter north-east, —
Raw and chill, as if winnowed through ices and snow,
All the way from the land of the wild Esquimaux, —
Until all our dreams of the land of the blest,
Like that red hunter's, turn to the sunny south-west.
O, soul of the spring-time, its light and its breath,
Bring warmth to this coldness, bring life to this death;
Renew the great miracle; let us behold
The stone from the mouth of the sepulchre rolled,
And Nature, like Lazarus, rise, as of old!
Let our faith, which in darkness and coldness has lain,
Revive with the warmth and the brightness again,
And in blooming of flower and budding of tree
The symbols and types of our destiny see;
The life of the spring-time, the life of the whole,
And as sun to the sleeping earth love to the soul!

STANZAS FOR THE TIMES—1850.

The evil days have come, — the poor
Are made a prey;
Bar up the hospitable door,
Put out the fire-lights, point no more
The wanderer's way.

For Pity now is crime; the chain
Which binds our states
Is melted at her hearth in twain,
Is rusted by her tears' soft rain:
Close up her gates.

Our Union, like a glacier stirred
By voice below,
Or bell of kine, or wing of bird,
A beggar's crust, a kindly word
May overthrow!

Poor, whispering tremblers! — yet we boast
Our blood and name;
Bursting its century-bolted frost,
Each gray cairn on the Northman's coast
Cries out for shame!

O for the open firmament,
The prairie free,
The desert hillside, cavern-rent,
The Pawnee's lodge, the Arab's tent,
The Bushman's tree!

Than web of Persian loom most rare,
Or soft divan,
Better the rough rock, bleak and bare,
Or hollow tree, which man may share
With suffering man.

I hear a voice: — "Thus saith the Law,
Let Love be dumb;
Clasping her liberal hands in awe,
Let sweet-lipped Charity withdraw
From hearth and home."

I hear another voice: — "The poor
Are thine to feed;
Turn not the outcast from thy door,
Nor give to bonds and wrong once more
Whom God hath freed."

Dear Lord! between that law and Thee
No choice remains;
Yet not untrue to man's decree,
Though spurning its rewards, is he
Who bears its pains.

Not mine Sedition's trumpet-blast
And threatening word;
I read the lesson of the Past,
That firm endurance wins at last
More than the sword.

O, clear-eyed Faith and Patience, thou
So calm and strong,
Angels of God! be near to show
His glorious future shining through
This night of wrong!

A SABBATH SCENE.

Scarce had the solemn Sabbath-bell
Ceased quivering in the steeple,
Scarce had the parson to his desk
Walked stately through his people,

When down the summer shaded street
A wasted female figure,
With dusky brow and naked feet,
Came rushing wild and eager.

She saw the white spire through the trees,
She heard the sweet hymn swelling;
O, pitying Christ! a refuge give
That poor one in Thy dwelling!

Like a scared fawn before the hounds,
Right up the aisle she glided,
While close behind her, whip in hand,
A lank-haired hunter strided.

She raised a keen and bitter cry,
To Heaven and Earth appealing; —
Were manhood's generous pulses dead?
Had woman's heart no feeling?

A score of stout hands rose between
The hunter and the flying;
Age clenched his staff, and maiden eyes
Flashed tearful, yet defying.

"Who dares profane this house and day?"
Cried out the angry pastor.
"Why, bless your soul, the wench 's a slave,
And I 'm her lord and master!

"I 've law and gospel on my side,
And who shall dare refuse me?"
Down came the parson, bowing low,
"My good sir, pray excuse me!

"Of course I know your right divine
To own and work and whip her;
Quick, deacon, throw that Polyglott
Before the wench, and trip her!"

Plump dropped the holy tome, and o'er
Its sacred pages stumbling,
Bound hand and foot, a slave once more,
The hapless wretch lay trembling.

I saw the parson tie the knots,
The while his flock addressing,
The Scriptural claims of slavery
With text on text impressing.

"Although," said he, "on Sabbath day,
All secular occupations
Are deadly sins, we must fulfil
Our moral obligations:

"And this commends itself as one
To every conscience tender;
As Paul sent back Onesimus,
My Christian friends, we send her!"

Shriek rose on shriek, — the Sabbath air
Her wild cries tore asunder;
I listened, with hushed breath, to hear
God answering with his thunder!

All still! — the very altar's cloth
Had smothered down her shrieking,
And, dumb, she turned from face to face,
For human pity seeking!

I saw her dragged along the aisle,
Her shackles harshly clanking;
I heard the parson, over all,
The Lord devoutly thanking!

My brain took fire: "Is this," I cried,
"The end of prayer and preaching?
Then down with pulpit, down with priest,
And give us Nature's teaching!

"Foul shame and scorn be on ye all
Who turn the good to evil,
And steal the Bible from the Lord,
To give it to the Devil!

"Than garbled text or parchment law
I own a statute higher;
And God is true, though every book
And every man 's a liar!"

Just then I felt the deacon's hand
In wrath my coat-tail seize on;
I heard the priest cry "Infidel!"
The lawyer mutter "Treason!"

I started up, — where now were church,
Slave, master, priest and people?
I only heard the supper-bell,
Instead of clanging steeple.

But, on the open window's sill,
O'er which the white blooms drifted,
The pages of a good old Book
The wind of summer lifted.

And flower and vine, like angel wings
Around the Holy Mother,
Waved softly there, as if God's truth
And Mercy kissed each other.

And freely from the cherry-bough
Above the casement swinging,
With golden bosom to the sun,
The oriole was singing.

As bird and flower made plain of old
The lesson of the Teacher,
So now I heard the written Word
Interpreted by Nature!

For to my ear methought the breeze
Bore Freedom's blessed word on;
Thus saith the Lord: Break every yoke,
Undo the heavy burden!

THE CALIFORNIAN AT THE GRAVE OF HIS WIFE.

I see thee still before me, even
As when we parted;
I, gold-mad, from thy presence driven, —
Thou, broken-hearted.
I hear the train's shrill signal blown,
Thy hurried prayer, the trembling tone
Which held me, while it bade me go;
And read, tear-written, on thy cheek,
The meaning which thou couldst not speak,
Love's prophecy of woe!

Yet thou art with the dreamless dead
Quietly sleeping;
Around the marble at thy head
The wild grass creeping!
How many thoughts, which but belong
Unto the living and the young,

Have whispered from my heart of thee,
When thou wast resting calmly there,
Shut from the blessed sun and air,
From life, and love, and me!

Why did I leave thee? Well I knew
A flower so frail
Might sink beneath the summer dew
Or soft spring gale;
I knew how delicately wrought
With feeling and intensest thought
Was each sweet lineament of thine;
And that thy heaven-ward soul would gain
An early freedom from its chain
Was there not many a sign?

There was a brightness in thine eye,
Yet not of mirth;
A light whose clear intensity
Was not of earth!
Through thy thin cheek a deepening red
Told where the feverish hectic fed;

And yet each fearful token gave
A newer and a dearer grace
To the mild beauty of thy face,
Which spoke not of the grave!

Why did I leave thee? Far away
They told of lands
Glittering with gold, with none to stay
The gleaner's hands.
For this I bartered thee, and sold
The riches of my heart for gold!
Its healthful love for sinful lust;
The calm content of honest toil
For feverish dream and fierce turmoil;
The wine of life for trodden dust.

Vain, worthless, all! The lowliest spot,
Enjoyed with thee,
A richer and a dearer lot
Had been to me;
For well I knew that thou couldst find
Contentment in a quiet mind,

And riches in a true man's love.
Why did I leave thee? Fully mine
The blessing of a heart like thine,
What could I ask above?

O, turn from me the sad rebuke
Of that mild eye!
Sweet saint of heaven, why shouldst thou look
On such as I?
Methinks I would not have thee know
My weak complaints and selfish woe,
Nor mar thy perfect peace to see
A poor, mean shadow of myself
Weigh o'er and o'er its paltry pelf
Against love, hope and thee!

REMEMBRANCE.

WITH COPIES OF THE AUTHOR'S WRITINGS.

Friend of mine! whose lot was cast
With me in the distant past, —
Where, like shadows flitting fast,

Fact and fancy, thought and theme,
Word and work, begin to seem
Like a half-remembered dream!

Touched by change have all things been,
Yet I think of thee as when
We had speech of lip and pen.

For the calm thy kindness lent
To a path of discontent,
Rough with trial and dissent;

Gentle words where such were few,
Softening blame where blame was true,
Praising where small praise was due;

For a waking dream made good,
For an ideal understood,
For thy Christian womanhood;

For thy marvellous gift to cull
From our common life and dull
Whatsoe'er is beautiful;

Thoughts and fancies, Hybla's bees
Dropping sweetness; true heart's ease
Of congenial sympathies; —

Still for these I own my debt;
Memory, with her eyelids wet,
Fain would thank thee even yet!

And as one who scatters flowers
Where the Queen of May's sweet hours
Sits, o'ertwined with blossomed bowers,

In superfluous zeal bestowing
Gifts where gifts are overflowing,
So I pay the debt I 'm owing.

To thy full thoughts, gay or sad,
Sunny-hued or sober clad,
Something of my own I add;

Well assured that thou wilt take
Even the offering which I make
Kindly for the giver's sake.

THE POOR VOTER ON ELECTION DAY.

The proudest now is but my peer,
The highest not more high;
To-day, of all the weary year,
A king of men am I.
To-day, alike are great and small,
The nameless and the known;
My palace is the people's hall,
The ballot-box my throne!

Who serves to-day upon the list
Beside the served shall stand;
Alike the brown and wrinkled fist,
The gloved and dainty hand!
The rich is level with the poor,
The weak is strong to-day;
And sleekest broadcloth counts no more
Than homespun frock of gray.

To-day let pomp and vain pretence
My stubborn right abide;
I set a plain man's common sense
Against the pedant's pride.
To-day shall simple manhood try
The strength of gold and land;
The wide world has not wealth to buy
The power in my right hand!

While there 's a grief to seek redress,
Or balance to adjust
Where weighs our living manhood less
Than Mammon's vilest dust, —
While there 's a right to need my vote,
A wrong to sweep away,
Up! clouted knee and ragged coat!
A man 's a man to-day!

TRUST.

The same old baffling questions! O, my friend!
I cannot answer them. In vain I send
My soul into the dark, where never burn
The lamps of science, nor the natural light
Of Reason's sun and stars! I cannot learn
Their great and solemn meanings, nor discern
The awful secrets of the eyes which turn
Evermore on us through the day and night
With silent challenge and a dumb demand,
Proffering the riddles of the dread unknown,
Like the calm Sphinxes, with their eyes of stone,
Questioning the centuries from their veils of sand!
I have no answer for myself or thee,
Save that I learned beside my mother's knee:
"All is of God that is, and is to be;
And God is good." Let this suffice us still,
Resting in child-like trust upon His will,
Who moves to His great ends unthwarted by the ill.

KATHLEEN.[6]

O Norah, lay your basket down,
And rest your weary hand,
And come and hear me sing a song
Of our old Ireland.

There was a lord of Galaway,
A mighty lord was he;
And he did wed a second wife,
A maid of low degree.

But he was old, and she was young,
And so, in evil spite,
She baked the black bread for his kin,
And fed her own with white.

She whipped the maids and starved the kern,
And drove away the poor;
"Ah, woe is me!" the old lord said,
"I rue my bargain sore!"

This lord he had a daughter fair,
Beloved of old and young,
And nightly round the shealing fires
Of her the gleeman sung.

"As sweet and good is young Kathleen
As Eve before her fall;"
So sang the harper at the fair,
So harped he in the hall.

"O, come to me, my daughter dear!
Come sit upon my knee,
For looking in your face, Kathleen,
Your mother's own I see!"

He smoothed and smoothed her hair away,
He kissed her forehead fair;
"It is my darling Mary's brow,
It is my darling's hair!"

O, then spake up the angry dame,
"Get up, get up," quoth she,
"I 'll sell ye over Ireland,
I 'll sell ye o'er the sea!"

She clipped her glossy hair away,
That none her rank might know,
She took away her gown of silk,
And gave her one of tow,

And sent her down to Limerick town,
And to a seaman sold
This daughter of an Irish lord
For ten good pounds in gold.

The lord he smote upon his breast,
And tore his beard so gray;
But he was old, and she was young,
And so she had her way.

Sure that same night the Banshee howled
To fright the evil dame,
And fairy folks, who loved Kathleen,
With funeral torches came.

She watched them glancing through the trees,
And glimmering down the hill;
They crept before the dead-vault door,
And there they all stood still!

"Get up, old man! the wake-lights shine!"
"Ye murthering witch," quoth he,
"So I'm rid of your tongue, I little care
If they shine for you or me."

"O, whoso brings my daughter back,
My gold and land shall have!"
O, then spake up his handsome page,
"No gold nor land I crave!

"But give to me your daughter dear,
And by the Holy Tree,
Be she on sea or on the land,
I'll bring her back to thee."

"My daughter is a lady born,
And you of low degree,
But she shall be your bride the day
Ye bring her back to me."

He sailed East, he sailed West,
And far and long sailed he,
Until he came to Boston town,
Across the great salt sea.

"O, have ye seen the young Kathleen,
The flower of Ireland?
Ye 'll know her by her eyes so blue,
And by her snow-white hand!"

Out spake an ancient man, "I know
The maiden whom ye mean;
I bought her of a Limerick man,
And she is called Kathleen.

"No skill hath she in household work,
Her hands are soft and white,
Yet well by loving looks and ways
She doth her cost requite."

So up they walked through Boston town,
And met a maiden fair,
A little basket on her arm
So snowy-white and bare.

"Come hither child, and say hast thou
This young man ever seen?"
They wept within each other's arms,
The page and young Kathleen.

"O, give to me this darling child,
And take my purse of gold."
"Nay, not by me," her master said,
"Shall sweet Kathleen be sold.

"We loved her in the place of one
The Lord hath early ta'en;
But, since her heart 's in Ireland,
We give her back again!"

O, for that same the saints in heaven
For his poor soul shall pray,
And Mary Mother wash with tears
His heresies away.

Sure now they dwell in Ireland,
As you go up Claremore
Ye 'll see their castle looking down
The pleasant Galway shore.

And the old lord's wife is dead and gone,
And a happy man is he,
For he sits beside his own Kathleen,
With her darling on his knee.

FIRST-DAY THOUGHTS.

In calm and cool and silence, once again
I find my old accustomed place among
My brethren, where, perchance, no human tongue
Shall utter words; where never hymn is sung,
Nor deep-toned organ blown, nor censer swung,
Nor dim light falling through the pictured pane!
There, syllabled by silence, let me hear
The still small voice which reached the prophet's ear;
Read in my heart a still diviner law
Than Israel's leader on his tables saw!
There let me strive with each besetting sin,
Recall my wandering fancies, and restrain
The sore disquiet of a restless brain;
And, as the path of duty is made plain,
May grace be given that I may walk therein,
Not like the hireling, for his selfish gain,
With backward glances and reluctant tread,
Making a merit of his coward dread, —

But, cheerful, in the light around me thrown,
Walking as one to pleasant service led;
Doing God's will as if it were my own,
Yet trusting not in mine, but in His strength alone!

KOSSUTH.[6]

Type of two mighty continents! — combining
The strength of Europe with the warmth and glow
Of Asian song and prophecy, — the shining
Of Orient splendors over Northern snow!
Who shall receive him? Who, unblushing, speak
Welcome to him, who, while he strove to break
The Austrian yoke from Magyar necks, smote off
At the same blow the fetters of the serf, —
Rearing the altar of his Father-land
On the firm base of freedom, and thereby
Lifting to Heaven a patriot's stainless hand,
Mocked not the God of Justice with a lie!
Who shall be Freedom's mouth-piece? Who shall give
Her welcoming cheer to the great fugitive?
Not he who, all her sacred trusts betraying,
Is scourging back to slavery's hell of pain
The swarthy Kossuths of our land again!

Not he whose utterance now from lips designed
The bugle-march of Liberty to wind,
And call her hosts beneath the breaking light, —
The keen reveille of her morn of fight, —
Is but the hoarse note of the bloodhound's baying,
The wolf's long howl behind the bondman's flight!
O for the tongue of him who lies at rest
In Quincy's shade of patrimonial trees, —
Last of the Puritan tribunes and the best, —
To lend a voice to Freedom's sympathies,
And hail the coming of the noblest guest
Which Old World wrong has given the New World of the West!

TO MY OLD SCHOOL-MASTER.

AN EPISTLE NOT AFTER THE MANNER OF HORACE.

Old friend, kind friend! lightly down
Drop time's snow-flakes on thy crown!
Never be thy shadow less,
Never fail thy cheerfulness;
Care, that kills the cat, may plough
Wrinkles in the miser's brow,
Deepen envy's spiteful frown,
Draw the mouths of bigots down,
Plague ambition's dream, and sit
Heavy on the hypocrite,
Haunt the rich man's door, and ride
In the gilded coach of pride; —
Let the fiend pass! — what can he
Find to do with such as thee?
Seldom comes that evil guest
Where the conscience lies at rest,

And brown health and quiet wit
Smiling on the threshold sit.

I, the urchin unto whom,
In that smoked and dingy room,
Where the district gave thee rule
O'er its ragged winter school,
Thou didst teach the mysteries
Of those weary A B C's, —
Where, to fill the every pause
Of thy wise and learned saws,
Through the cracked and crazy wall
Came the cradle-rock and squall,
And the goodman's voice, at strife
With his shrill and tipsy wife, —
Luring us by stories old,
With a comic unction told,
More than by the eloquence
Of terse birchen arguments
(Doubtful gain, I fear), to look
With complacence on a book! —
Where the genial pedagogue
Half forgot his rogues to flog,
Citing tale or apologue,

Wise and merry in its drift
As old Phædrus' two-fold gift,
Had the little rebels known it,
Risum et prudentiam monet!
I, — the man of middle years,
In whose sable locks appears
Many a warning fleck of gray, —
Looking back to that far day,
And thy primal lessons, feel
Grateful smiles my lips unseal,
As, remembering thee, I blend
Olden teacher, present friend,
Wise with antiquarian search,
In the scrolls of state and church;
Named on history's title-page,
Parish-clerk and justice sage;
For the ferule's wholesome awe
Wielding now the sword of law.

Threshing Time's neglected sheaves,
Gathering up the scattered leaves
Which the wrinkled sibyl cast
Careless from her as she passed, —

Two-fold citizen art thou,
Freeman of the past and now.
He who bore thy name of old
Midway in the heavens did hold
Over Gibeon moon and sun;
Thou hast bidden them backward run;
Of to-day the present ray
Flinging over yesterday!

Let the busy ones deride
What I deem of right thy pride;
Let the fools their tread-mills grind,
Look not forward nor behind,
Shuffle in and wriggle out,
Veer with every breeze about,
Turning like a wind-mill sail,
Or a dog that seeks his tail;
Let them laugh to see thee fast
Tabernacled in the Past,
Working out, with eye and lip,
Riddles of old penmanship,
Patient as Belzoni there
Sorting out, with loving care,

Mummies of dead questions stripped
From their seven-fold manuscript!

Dabbling, in their noisy way,
In the puddles of to-day,
Little know they of that vast
Solemn ocean of the past,
On whose margin, wreck-bespread,
Thou art walking with the dead,
Questioning the stranded years,
Waking smiles, by turns, and tears,
As thou callest up again
Shapes the dust has long o'erlain, —
Fair-haired woman, bearded man,
Cavalier and Puritan;
In an age whose eager view
Seeks but present things, and new,
Mad for party, sect and gold,
Teaching reverence for the old.

On that shore, with fowler's tact,
Coolly bagging fact on fact,
Naught amiss to thee can float,
Tale, or song, or anecdote;

Village gossip, centuries old,
Scandals by our grandames told,
What the pilgrim's table spread,
Where he lived, and whom he wed,
Long-drawn bill of wine and beer
For his ordination cheer,
Or the flip that well-nigh made
Glad his funeral cavalcade;
Weary prose, and poet's lines,
Flavored by their age, like wines,
Eulogistic of some quaint,
Doubtful, puritanic saint;
Lays that quickened husking jigs,
Jests that shook grave periwigs,
When the parson had his jokes
And his glass, like other folks;
Sermons that, for mortal hours,
Taxed our fathers' vital powers,
As the long nineteenthlies poured
Downward from the sounding-board,
And, for fire of Pentecost,
Touched their beards December's frost.

Time is hastening on, and we
What our fathers are shall be, —
Shadow-shapes of memory!
Joined to that vast multitude
Where the great are but the good,
And the mind of strength shall prove
Weaker than the heart of love;
Pride of gray-beard wisdom less
Than the infant's guilelessness,
And his song of sorrow more
Than the crown the Psalmist wore!
Who shall then, with pious zeal,
At our moss-grown thresholds kneel,
From a stained and stony page
Reading to a careless age,
With a patient eye like thine,
Prosing tale and limping line,
Names and words the hoary rime
Of the Past has made sublime?
Who shall work for us as well
The antiquarian's miracle?
Who to seeming life recall
Teacher grave and pupil small?

Who shall give to thee and me
Freeholds in futurity ?

Well, whatever lot be mine,
Long and happy days be thine,
Ere thy full and honored age
Dates of time its latest page !
Squire for master, State for school,
Wisely lenient, live and rule ;
Over grown-up knave and rogue
Play the watchful pedagogue ;
Or, while pleasure smiles on duty,
At the call of youth and beauty,
Speak for them the spell of law
Which shall bar and bolt withdraw,
And the flaming sword remove
From the Paradise of Love.
Still, with undimmed eyesight, pore
Ancient tome and record o'er ;
Still thy week-day lyrics croon,
Pitch in church the Sunday tune,
Showing something, in thy part,
Of the old Puritanic art,
Singer after Sternhold's heart !

In thy pew, for many a year,
Homilies from Oldbug hear,[7]
Who to wit like that of South,
And the Syrian's golden mouth,
Doth the homely pathos add
Which the pilgrim preachers had;
Breaking, like a child at play,
Gilded idols of the day,
Cant of knave and pomp of fool
Tossing with his ridicule,
Yet, in earnest or in jest,
Ever keeping truth abreast.
And, when thou art called, at last,
To thy townsmen of the past,
Not as stranger shalt thou come;
Thou shalt find thyself at home!
With the little and the big,
Woollen cap and periwig,
Madam in her high-laced ruff,
Goody in her home-made stuff, —
Wise and simple, rich and poor,
Thou hast known them all before!

NOTES.

Note 1 page. 13.

"Thou 'mindst me of a story told
In rare Bernardin's leaves of gold."

The incident here referred to is related in a note to Bernardin Henri Saint Pierre's *Etudes de la Nature*.

"We arrived at the habitation of the Hermits a little before they sat down to their table, and while they were still at church. J. J. Rousseau proposed to me to offer up our devotions. The hermits were reciting the Litanies of Providence, which are remarkably beautiful. After we had addressed our prayers to God, and the hermits were proceeding to the refectory, Rousseau said to me, with his heart overflowing, 'At this moment I experience what is said in the gospel: *Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.* There is here a feeling of peace and happiness which penetrates the soul.' I said, 'If Fenelon had lived, you would have been a Catholic.' He exclaimed, with tears in his eyes, 'O, if Fenelon were alive, I would struggle to get into his service, even as a lackey!'"

In my sketch of Saint Pierre, it will be seen that I have somewhat antedated the period of his old age. At that time he was not probably more than fifty. In describing him, I have by no means exaggerated his own history of his mental condition at the period of the story. In the fragmentary Sequel to his Studies of Nature, he thus speaks of himself: — "The ingratitude of those of whom I had deserved kindness, unexpected family misfortunes,

the total loss of my small patrimony through enterprises solely undertaken for the benefit of my country, the debts under which I lay oppressed, the blasting of all my hopes, — these combined calamities made dreadful inroads upon my health and reason." "I found it impossible to continue in a room where there was company, especially if the doors were shut. I could not even cross an alley in a public garden, if several persons had got together in it. When alone, my malady subsided. I felt myself likewise at ease in places where I saw children only. At the sight of any one walking up to the place where I was, I felt my whole frame agitated, and retired. I often said to myself, My sole study has been to merit well of mankind ; why do I fear them ? "

He attributes his improved health of mind and body to the counsels of his friend, J. J. Rousseau. "I renounced," says he, "my books. I threw my eyes upon the works of Nature, which spake to all my senses a language which neither time nor nations have it in their power to alter. Thenceforth my histories and my journals were the herbage of the fields and meadows. My thoughts did not go forth painfully after them, as in the case of human systems ; but their thoughts, under a thousand engaging forms, quietly sought me. In these I studied, without effort, the laws of that Universal Wisdom which had surrounded me from the cradle, but on which heretofore I had bestowed little attention."

Speaking of Rousseau, he says : "I derived inexpressible satisfaction from his society. What I prized still more than his genius, was his probity. He was one of the few literary characters tried in the furnace of affliction, to whom you could, with perfect security, confide your most secret thoughts." "Even when he deviated, and became the victim of himself or of others, he could forget his own misery, in devotion to the welfare of mankind. He was uniformly the advocate of the miserable. There might be inscribed on his tomb these affecting words from that Book, of which he carried always about him some select passages, during the last years of his life : '*His sins, which are many, are forgiven, for he loved much.*' "

Note 2, page 18.

"Like that the gray-haired sea-king passed."

Dr. Hooker, who accompanied Sir James Ross in his expedition of 1841, thus describes the appearance of that unknown land of frost and fire, which was seen in latitude 77° south, — a stupendous chain of mountains, the whole mass of which, from its highest point to the ocean, was covered with everlasting snow and ice:

"The water and the sky were both as blue, or rather more intensely blue, than I have ever seen them in the tropics, and all the coast was one mass of dazzlingly beautiful peaks of snow, which, when the sun approached the horizon, reflected the most brilliant tints of golden yellow and scarlet; and then, to see the dark cloud of smoke, tinged with flame, rising from the volcano in a perfect unbroken column, one side jet-black, the other giving back the colors of the sun, sometimes turning off at a right-angle by some current of wind, and stretching many miles to leeward! This was a sight so surpassing everything that can be imagined, and so heightened by the consciousness that we had penetrated, under the guidance of our commander, into regions far beyond what was ever deemed practicable, that it caused a feeling of awe to steal over us at the consideration of our own comparative insignificance and helplessness, and at the same time an indescribable feeling of the greatness of the Creator in the works of his hand."

Note 3, page 58.

The storming of the city of Derne, in 1805, by Gen. Eaton, at the head of nine Americans, forty Greeks, and a motley array of Turks and Arabs, was one of those feats of hardihood and daring which have in all ages attracted the admiration of the multitude. The higher and holier heroism of Christian self-denial and sacrifice, in the humble walks of private duty, is seldom so well appreciated.

Note 4, page 73.

It is proper to say that these lines are the joint impromptu of my sister and myself. They are inserted here as an expression of our

admiration of the gifted stranger whom we have since learned to love as a friend.

Note 5, page 96.

Kathleen.

This ballad was originally published in a prose work of the author's, as the song of a wandering Milesian schoolmaster.

In the 17th century slavery in the New World was by no means confined to the natives of Africa. Political offenders and criminals were transported by the British government to the plantations of Barbadoes and Virginia, where they were sold like cattle in the market. Kidnapping of free and innocent white persons was practised to a considerable extent in the seaports of the United Kingdom.

Note 6, page 104.

Kossuth.

It can scarcely be necessary to say that there are elements in the character and passages in the history of the great Hungarian statesman and orator, which necessarily command the admiration of those, even, who believe that no political revolution was ever worth the price of human blood.

Note 7, page 113.

"Homilies from Oldbug hear."

Dr. W——, author of "The Puritan," under the name of Jonathan Oldbug.

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> Sat kingly sweetness, kind and calm command,
> Yet with long suffering blended; for the soil
> Of dust was on his garb and sandalled sole —
> Dust on the locks of fertile gold which flowed
> From his fair forehead, rippling down his neck —
> Bedropt, defiled with cold and cave-like dew.
> One hand a staff of virent emerald held
> As 'twere a sapling of the tree of life;
> And one smoothed in his breast a radiant dove,
> Fluttering its wings in lightnings, thousand hued, —
> The sole companion of his pilgrimage.
> Silent he stood and gazed.'

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